

March 15th, 22nd & 29th

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

Philippians Sermon 8

Pastor Josh Montgomery

“The Heart of a Shepherd”

Philippians 4:1-23

Introduction:

Paul is an amazing picture and illustration of what the Grace of God can do to a man.

1. We are reminded of Paul’s Course.-Acts 8:1-3
2. We are reminded of Paul’s Conversion.- I Timothy 1:12-15
3. We are reminded of Paul’s Commission.-I Corinthians 1:17-18
4. We are reminded of Paul’s Compassion.

Notice the terms of love and endearment that Paul uses in Vs 1 of our text.

“My Brethren”

“Dearly Beloved”

“longed for”

“my Joy”

“crown”

These are all terms of affection and love that Paul uses to express his feelings for the Church at Philippi.

While making these terms of affection and love to the Church at Philippi, he will follow up these terms of affection by giving them some Pastoral council and truth.

Truly in these verses we see “The Heart of a Shepherd” or “The Heart of a Pastor”.

End of Introduction:

1. A Contextual Plea. Vs 1-5

The word “Therefore” links the context of Philippians 4 back to Philippians 3.

Thus, in light of the Apostates (Philippians 3:18-19) and in light of coming of the LORD. (Philippians 3:20-21) there are some things that Paul wanted them to do.

1. An Unwavering Stand. Vs 1

*“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, **so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.**”*

A. The *Persistency* of our Stand. “*stand fast*”

Stand fast- to stand firm-to persevere, to persist-to keep one's standing.

In other words, it means to “Stand and to keep on Standing”.

B. The *Position* of our Stand. “*in the Lord*”

The power of our stand is based upon the position of our stand!

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2. A *United Spirit*. Vs 2

“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Paul openly deals with 2 women in the church that had some sort of disagreement and division among themselves.

Paul called them out by name because he knew the only way to resolve this issue was to call the 2 offending parties out, and admonish them to get things right!

I love what John Phillips wrote on this verse:

We can imagine the reaction in Philippi. The church had welcomed Epaphroditus back home, and he had called a meeting for the first reading of Paul's letter. Everyone was there; the place was packed. Epaphroditus or one of the other elders broke the seal on the scroll and he began to read.

Sentence by sentence the Epistle unfolded. Here and there were hints that Paul knew about the squabble. Euodias and Syntyche looked at one another and just as uneasily looked away.

They darted angry looks at Epaphroditus. Did he go and blab to Paul? one of them wondered. I'll give him a piece of my mind. Then they heard Paul's words regarding Epaphroditus: “Receive him therefore in the Lord.”

And suddenly like a bolt from the blue the two ladies heard their own names being read: “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Like a flash of lightning and a thunderclap the squabbling pair were named—bluntly, shockingly. Every eye was on them. They felt like curling up and dying on the spot; they wished the ground would open and swallow them up. The atmosphere in the meeting room was charged.

A deathly hush fell on the gathering. One of the ladies flushed a crimson red and burst into tears. The other bit her lips and turned as white as a sheet.

If the entire congregation didn't know about the issue before, they knew now. And now this congregation has a collective desire for these ladies to get right with one another to keep the harmony and unity in the Church.

Paul wanted them in light of the coming of the LORD to resolve their issue and to go on for God's glory!

3. An *Unrestricted Support*. Vs 3

“And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.”

Paul not only calls out their division, but he also provides a solution to their issue, and that was to quit focusing on themselves and to get busy laboring in the work of the LORD.

We get “church hurt” when we are focused on ourselves and out our feelings!

“It's more difficult to hit a moving target”

4. An *Unashamed Shout*. Vs 4

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

He also encourages these believers to have joy in the LORD and to Rejoice in the LORD!

Rejoice- to be glad.

Always-at all times, always, ever.

Sadly the Church has become silent in these days.

If you want a “shouting” church, then you need to shout!

Psalm 150

Psalm 107:1-2 *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

5. An *Unselfish Submission*. Vs 5a

“Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

Not only did he want their rejoicing in the LORD to be “unashamed” but he also wanted their holiness and commitment to the LORD to be well known!

The word “Moderation” means “yeildedness”. It speaks of “selflessness” of a individual that is ready to yield and submit.

Ephesians 5:21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

James 4:6-7 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

6. An *Understanding* of the *Season*. *Vs 5b*

The Lord is at hand.”

He concludes this thought by reminding the Church that the LORD is at hand.

This phrase means of times imminent and soon to come pass.

In other words, Paul is saying we need to do all these things because the LORD could come in the Rapture, at any moment!

I John 2:28 *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

II. A *Comfort* in *Prayer*. *Vs 6-7*

Paul now moves to the blessing and comfort that the believers can enjoy through the avenue of prayer.

1. The *Reality* we *Face*. *Vs 6a*

“Be careful for nothing;”

Careful- To be anxious-to be troubled with cares.

This little phrase gives the idea of worry.

As much as we do not like to admit it, we all deal with worry on a daily basis!

Matthew 6:33-34 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

2. The *Remedy* we *Find*. *Vs 6b*

To me it is very interesting to find a man in prison writing a group of believers and encouraging them not to worry!

How do Paul keep from worrying?

“but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

The way that we are to combat worry is to pray about everything!

He mentions 3 words connected to Prayer.

“**Supplication**”-need, indigence, want, a seeking, asking, entreating.

“**Thanksgiving**”- the giving of thanks.

“**Requests**”- petition, request, required.

We are often good at making request but how good are we at attaching thanksgiving to our supplications and request?

3. The **Result** of our **Faith**. Vs 7

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

The result of prayer is peace!

A. The **Definition** of this Peace. *“which passeth all understanding”*

B. The **Defense** of this Peace. *“shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

Part 3- March 29th, 2023

III. A **Council Prescribed**. Vs 8-9

1. The **Consideration** of our **Mind**. Vs 8

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**”*

In Vs 6 of our text he informs us of things that we need to Rid our minds of, “Be careful for nothing”. Of course we know that this little phrase refers to worry.

So we are to Rid our minds in Vs 6 but then in Vs 8 he tells us what to Replace worry with in our minds.

Proverbs 23:7 *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

“A Guarded thought life has to be accompanied by a guided thought life”-John Phillips

The mind, our thought life is a battle field that we must give great attention to.

2 Corinthians 10:5 *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Paul will list several things for us to keep our minds upon. If we will adapt to these things, we will have victory in our minds.

We must deliberately think on these things!

Make up your mind, to think on these things!

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

A. He deals with *Honesty*.

“whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,”

“Whatsoever things are honest.” We are to give thought to those things that are honorable, grave, and venerable, and that claim respect.- Strauss.

B. He deals with *Holiness*.

“whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,”

The way that we keep pure thoughts is by excluding impure thoughts!

“Whatsoever things are just.” Thought must be given to that which is right or righteous, both by divine and human standards.-Strauss

“Whatsoever things are pure.” Purity in all things must be a part of one’s thought-life. The peace of God will replace wrong thoughts, with pure thoughts, impure motives with pure motives, and impure acts with pure acts.- Strauss

C. He deals with being *Helpful*.

“whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;”

“Whatsoever things are lovely.” Beauty of character is a worthy replacement for the ugly, the selfish, and the arrogant. The former draws while the latter repels. That which is lovely shows forth the beauty of holiness.- Strauss

“Whatsoever things are of good report.” The good report is the well-sounding well-spoken report that wins the approbation of others.- Strauss

D. He deals with the *Honorable*.

“if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Concerning these six virtues, Paul says: “Think on these things.” These are things that call for careful reflection. Our minds should dwell on them at all times.- Strauss

2. The *Conduct* of our *Ministry*. Vs 9a

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:”

We will recall that in Philippians 3:17 that Paul told the church to follow Godly examples: *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

Once again, he emphasizes this truth!

“Learned”- to increase one's knowledge

“Received”-To Accept and not to Reject.

“Heard”- to attend to.

“Seen”-to perceive with the eyes.

He states all these things that you have received and accepted of me you need to put into practice. Notice he gives a simple command “Do”

He not only wanted them to “think” on these things. But he wanted them to “do” these things!

It is not enough to have the knowledge of what you are to do, you need to do what you know!

II Timothy 3:10 *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,*

3. The *Companionship* of our *Master*. Vs 9b

“and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Paul mentions the Peace of God in Vs 7 but now he takes us to the God of peace, the one who provides this peace that we can enjoy!

In other words, Paul is stating that if we will keep our minds right and our ministry in action that God will bless our labor for his glory!

Instead of asking God to bless what we are doing. We need to do what God is blessing!

IV. The Contentment Practiced. Vs 10-13

Content- sufficient for one's self, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support. Independent of external circumstances.

1. The Sincere Desire. Vs 10

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.”

Some Ten or Twelve years before this text, the Philippian Church had provided financial support to Paul in his Gospel ministry..

But then for some unknown reason they lacked opportunity to support Paul.

Most Commentators agree that this means that they had no way of getting the support to him.

But now with the arrival of Epaphroditus they were able once again to support Paul's ministry.

Point: Thank God for the faithful givers of this local church!

2. *The Stated Disposition. Vs 11-12*

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”

Paul is not complaining. He does not have a bitter nor does he have an angry Spirit. He has learned that God will take care of him!

- Abased or Abound
- Full or Hungry
- Abound or Suffer need

Paul is stating that he has learned that whatever his lot or his situation that he had peace and he had provision!

3. *The Spiritual Dependence. Vs 13*

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

This is the first of two of the most “taken out of context” verses in the Bible.

When Paul wrote this sentence he was not talking about lifting weights, playing football or anything carnal.

Within the context he was speaking of the fact that no matter what he had or did not have in this life, he had learned that he could do what he was called to do through Jesus Christ!

Paul addresses the reality of limited finances in Vs 12, but here he acknowledges the Reality of the power of God!

V. *The Churches Participation. Vs 14-19*

1. *The Perception of the Burden. Vs 14-15*

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.”

They knew that the Gospel had to be proclaimed!

A. Their Conversion.-Someone had told them!

B. Their Commission.-They had accepted the responsibility of sending out the light of the Gospel!

C. Their Collection.- They not only saw the burden, but they took up a special offering for the outreach of the Gospel!

I Corinthians 16:1-2 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

2. The Partnership with their Brother. Vs 15b-18

“no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

A. They partnered with him Financially. Vs 15b

“no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.”

B. They partnered with him Prayerfully.

C. They partnered with him Consistently. Vs 16

“For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.”

3. The Purposed Benefit. Vs 17

“Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”

Paul was not trying to “pad his pocket” or “build a kingdom”. He was simply Preaching the Gospel and gathering souls to the account of the Church at Philippi.

4. The Provided Blessings. Vs 18

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.”

You don’t hear a Missionary or a Preacher often saying that they had enough support and provisions. But remember, Paul was a man who was content!

5. The Promise from the Bible. Vs 19

This is the 2nd most “taken out of context” verse in our Bible.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

A. The Almighty. *“But my God”*

B. The Assurance. *“shall supply all your need”*

C. The Accordance. *“according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

Note, it is not according to my riches, but his riches!

This promise is NOT to someone who has spent all their money on the foolishness and then expects God to pay their bills.

This promise is to a believer who has obeyed God in their giving, and God promises to meet their needs because of their obedience!

VI. The Conclusion of Philippians. Vs 20-23

As we come to the closing 4 verses of this prayer letter, we note Paul’s final words to his beloved friends at Philippi.

What would be the last words of this Preacher to this congregation?

1. The Exaltation of the Sovereign. Vs 20

“Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

He closed out doing what he started out doing and that was giving God glory!

This tells me that Paul did not allow his circumstances to cause him to become bitter or upset but rather he still had praise on his lips to the God of heaven!

2. The Expression from the Saints. Vs 21

“Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.”

He speaks a personal word of greeting to the congregation, and sends back a greeting from the Brethren that were with Paul.

3. The Extension of Salvation. Vs 22

“All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.”

The Gospel message had reached the residence of Caesars house!

The word “household” means a family or property.

So this could mean that there were Servants and Soldiers of Caesar’s that were saved. Or it could also mean that there were members of Caesars family that were born again by the power of the Gospel!

Paul was letting this Church know that their giving and their labor was not in vain!

4. The Edification from the Servant. Vs 23

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

In the closing statement he gives a parting word concerning the ever present grace of God!
I love the fact that the last thing they heard Paul speak of in this life, was the Grace of God.
For it was the Grace of God that saved Lydia, the woman possessed with the devil and the
Philippian Jailor who made up the early membership of the Church at Philippi.
It was all Grace!